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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1338
INFO RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5880
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2640
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3000
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000154

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/RSP; NSC FOR E. PHU

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PDEM](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: FORMER PRESIDENT MEGAWATI CONSIDERS SULTAN AS
RUNNING MATE

REF: A. JAKARTA 0024

[1](#)B. 08 JAKARTA 1195 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The opposition Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) just finished its national conference. The key topic on the agenda was the party's choice for vice presidential candidate for the July presidential election. Most party regulars seem to agree that the Sultan of Yogyakarta would be a good choice, though some other names were mentioned. Party leader and former president Megawati will make the final decision. PDI-P--running on a populist program--continues to do well in the polls ahead of the April legislative election. END SUMMARY.

CONFERENCE IN SOLO

[1](#)2. (U) Indonesia's major opposition party, PDI-P, has just concluded its national conference. The annual meeting took place in Solo, Central Java, January 27-28. PDI-P representatives from throughout the country participated. The meeting was focused on mobilizing the party ahead of the April parliamentary election and the July presidential election. POL FSN attended the conference as an observer.

[1](#)3. (U) In her remarks opening the conference, former president and PDI-P presidential candidate Megawati Sukarnoputri lashed out at the government for not (she said) doing enough to help the poor -- "The government's failure is due to policy choices that do not support the people." Tying the campaign to economic issues, she said PDI-P needed to support poverty alleviation and job creation as the way forward.

SULTAN TOPS VP LIST

[1](#)4. (C) The major focus of the conference was choosing a vice presidential candidate. Topping the shortlist (and winning a straw poll) was Sultan Hamengkubuwono X, the Governor of Yogyakarta District. A member of the Golkar Party, the Sultan is also running for President, but has not secured the backing of his own party for the nomination. While not considered particularly charismatic, he is a popular figure in Yogyakarta and in some parts of Java Island. His approach to politics is secularist, similar to PDI-P's. He has not indicated whether he would accept an offer to run for vice president (and thus end his presidential campaign). He did attend the conference and held several closed door meetings with Megawati.

[1](#)5. (U) Also on the shortlist (and finishing second in the straw poll) was Gerindra Party founder Prabowo Subianto, a

former general. PDI-P delegates also considered the qualifications of People's Consultative Assembly Chair and Prosperous Justice Party leader (PKS) Hidayat Nur Wahid, Golkar Party member Surya Paloh, and former Golkar chair Akbar Tandjung.

MEGAWATI WILL CHOOSE

16. (C) Megawati will choose the VP candidate. The exact timetable for her decision is not known, but it may happen before the April 9 legislative elections. For her part, Megawati is believed to like the Sultan as a choice, seeing him as an effective vote-getter in the Java region (the most populous region of the country). Her influential husband, Taufik Kiemas, also is said to support the choice of the Sultan. It is still not clear, however, if the Sultan would accept an offer as vice presidential candidate since he has presidential aspirations.

PDI-P LOOKS TO BE IN GOOD POSITION

17. (C) Although it runs closely with the President's Democrat Party (PD) in recent surveys (see reftels), PDI-P remains a strong contender to finish first in the April elections. The party is well organized, has many cadre, and has funding for TV ads. Most contacts agree that the Sultan would make a solid pick for Megawati for VP, helping her in the Java region. In 2004, commentators felt that Megawati's choice for VP, Hashim Muzadi, the head of mainstream Muslim organization Nahdlatul Ulama, was not an effective candidate and hurt her re-election effort. Megawati, if she is to beat

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the relatively popular President Yudhoyono, needs to make a strong choice this time around.
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